

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-5, 7-8, 10-12, 14-16, 18 and 20-27 are currently pending in the present application. Upon entry of the foregoing amendments, claims 1, 3-5, 7-8, 10-12, 14-16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26 and 28-31 will be pending.

Claims 1, 4-5, 8, 11-12, 15-16, 20, 22, 24 and 26 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,998,055 to Kurita, *et al.* ("Kurita"). Claims 3, 7, 10, 14 and 18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Kurita in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,541,015 to Tajima, *et al.* ("Tajima"). Finally, claims 21, 23, 25 and 27 stand objected to as depending from rejected base claims, but are noted to be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of their respective base and intervening claims.

The Applicants wish to express their appreciation for the courtesies extended during the Examiner Interview conducted on May 20, 2003. In view of the discussions of the present invention and the Kurita reference, and the agreement reached in the Interview, the Applicants have prepared the foregoing amendments and following remarks in response to the April 8, 2003 Office Action.

The Applicants have amended claim 1 as agreed, to clarify that the gas enters the first of the regions in a direction parallel to a longitudinal axis of the region. The Applicants respectfully submit that, as agreed, this amendment distinguishes claim 1 and its dependent claims 3-5, 7-8, 10-12, 14-16, 18 over Kurita under §§ 102(e) and 103(a).

In addition, claims 5, 11-12 and 16 have been amended to correct minor typographic errors or omissions.

The Applicants are grateful for the Examiner's indication that claims 21, 23, 25 and 27 would be allowable if amended to incorporate the limitations of their respective base and intervening claims. In order to accomplish this objective, the Applicants have amended claims 20 and 24 to incorporate the limitations of patentable claims 21 and 25, and canceled claims 21, 23, 25 and 27. Thus, claims 20, 22, 24 and 26 remain in the application and are now in allowable form.

Finally, in reviewing the foregoing amendments, the Applicants noted that the amended claims would cover arrangements of the plurality of projections within each region where the projections were spaced in the same manner in both the width and length directions, could be interpreted as not covering projections in the form of regularly-spaced ribs extending along at least a portion of the regions. The Applicants therefore have added

new claims 28-31, modeled on amended, patentable claims 20, 22, 24 and 26, to cover such rib arrangements.

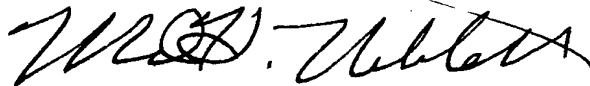
Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the foregoing amendments place the presently pending claims in condition for allowance. The Applicants therefore earnestly solicit issuance of a Notice of Allowance for claims 1, 3-5, 7-8, 10-12, 14-16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26 and 28-31.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (202) 220-4232 to discuss any matter concerning this application.

No additional fees are believed to be required in connection with this submission. Nonetheless, the Applicants authorize payment of any additional fees under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or § 1.17 or credit of any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 11-0600.

Respectfully submitted,



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